

Mother charged after daughter dies in car while she was working at Amazon

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A mother in North Carolina is facing multiple felony charges following a fatal incident on June 26 in which her 8-year-old daughter suffocated in an Amazon parking lot while her mother was at work inside of the fulfillment center.

According to police records, 36-year-old Ashlee Rochelle Stallings was arrested Thursday and charged with one count of involuntary manslaughter and one count of child abuse by willful act causing serious injury.

This accident involving a working class mother and her child while at work for the trillion-dollar capitalist enterprise has been ignored by the majority of the capitalist press. However, in the various articles published by local media, the incident is framed to absolve Amazon of any culpability in the tragedy.

The official line pushed by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, echoed by the press, is that Stallings told detectives she knowingly left her daughter in her car, with the air conditioning turned on, while she went to work her shift at the Amazon Fulfillment Center. It is speculated that the daughter turned off the AC because she was cold and could not figure out how to turn it back on. The temperature reached as high as 99 degrees Fahrenheit and was the hottest day of the year in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Everything is done to paint Stallings as a negligent and contemptible mother, but absent from the official narrative is any questioning of the social conditions that would deprive a working parent of childcare, forcing them to bring their children to their workplaces. The fact that Stallings attempted to stay in communication with her daughter via text messages while she toiled inside of an Amazon sweatshop is buried in media coverage.

“She admitted she knew the temperature was 94

degrees outside and that she should not have left the victim inside the car alone,” police wrote in the affidavit, utilizing language that deprives the situation of any social context.

One should ask, however, why is a mother working at one of the world’s largest corporations not paid enough to afford childcare or otherwise provided assistance by the company? How could management and security at the Amazon facility be wholly ignorant of Stallings and her daughter’s predicament when Amazon warehouses—inside and out—are monitored 24/7?

Amazon founder-owner Jeff Bezos siphons nearly \$60,000 every minute into his personal coffers while the average Amazon worker, making up to \$19 per hour, cannot reach this total in an entire year of work. In the socioeconomic reality where the vast majority of workers live hand to mouth, the greed of the billionaire overlords is entirely criminal in character. The death of Stallings’ child is a direct consequence of the parasitic nature of the capitalist system.

In cynical fashion, Amazon feigned crocodile tears over the incident and announced that the company was cooperating with law enforcement.

“This is an incredibly tragic incident,” Amazon said in a statement. “During this difficult time, we’re supporting our employees and have made counseling resources widely available. We’re also working closely with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department as they investigate.”

Where were these resources when a mother in need was making the company profit, or prior to any other of the many fatal accidents that occur at Amazon? A tiny fraction of Bezos’ wealth would be enough to provide childcare and other resources for the workers who are the source of his profits.

Furthermore, Amazon’s readiness to announce its

cooperation with police suggests the company is doing everything to distance itself from any responsibility in the tragedy when its own guilt is evident. While corporations and the financial elite have enriched themselves over the last few years, this affluence comes at the cost of impoverishment and the deterioration of the living conditions of the working class.

In North Carolina, as well as nationally, the rise in childcare costs has even outpaced the cost of other domestic expenses such as groceries, housing and transportation. According to a Bank of America analysis, an average two-income household can expect to spend 15 percent of their combined earnings on infant and childcare costs, but a single-income home could see these expenses account for up to 40 percent of household expenditures, more than food and even rent.

The growth of child poverty is also connected to the Biden administration's decision to terminate pandemic-era social programs such as the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) which pumped some \$40 billion into childcare services. Without federal assistance, high costs push many parents out of the market, causing a cascading effect on childcare providers, as reduced revenue limits the number of staff they can hire and children they can serve.

This process, as well as Amazon's negligence, is reproduced internationally. The company is granted immunity from the social devastation it produces while workers pay the ultimate price. What justice there is for workers, in rare conditions, is limited to fines for the corporation, such as the pitiful \$7,000 Amazon was charged for the death of Caes Gruesbeck in 2023.

The death of Stallings' daughter, as well as her own prosecution, are not only representative of the injustice of capitalist society but also demonstrate the need for the socialist organization of global society. Under socialism, plenty of resources would be made available to care for children and prevent such tragedies from occurring.

In the era of escalating imperialist conflict, the working class must become conscious of the indifference with which the ruling class treats their lives for the sake of profit, countering this with an internationalist socialist perspective aimed at creating a society that allocates resources based on social need.



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